

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, April 12, 1877, with transcript

Letter from Miss Mabel Hubbard to Mr. Alexander Graham Bell. New York. April 12th., 1877. My darling Alec:

I will write to you again today as the mail has brought no letter from you either from Boston or Paterson and I half hope you are good and are staying at home. I do wonder what you are doing this moment, if you are journeying on coming nearer and ever nearer to me or are busy with your classes. I wish you could sometimes write down all you say to them, that I may have an idea what your daily work is like.

Last night Gertrude showed me the notice of your lectures in Steinway Hall and Brooklyn to be given simultaneously on the 7th. May. It was like a bad dream. I do wish you would try the experiment some where else, I am in constant fear and trembling. I have no doubt but that you will acquit yourself well, but Oh! that other lecture when you are not present to make all go smoothly. One thing at least you can do and that is (!) tell the advertiser to call you by your full name — Also be sure that when you lecture the gentleman who introduces you shall speak of Alexander Graham, no A's for me.

Don't you suppose you can begin preparing your lectures now, so there will be no hurry at the end. I want them to be in your best style. New York is full of our aristocratic relations and I do want them to see what a splendid man you are and how right it is that I should be so proud of you. That better part of you that I love they can never see and that belongs to me and I do not care to have it paraded before their eyes.

What nonsense I am talking, perhaps the fire across the street and the stranger cousins at lunch have over set my equilibrium. Yes my 2 dear we have had a little excitement. Old Chickering Hall the big building right opposite took fire yesterday afternoon and the upper

Library of Congress

story was in flames and burning beautifully before the firemen got it under control. The papers say some eight thousand dollars worth was consumed and much more damaged by water.

As for my Cousins they consisted of Dr. William Mercer and his wife. Auntie told me to call him Cousin William, but I needn't call her anything though she must be a cousin in her own right being named Gertrude and of course everybody named Gertrude is called so in honor of one of the illimitable Gertrudes of this family. Dr. Mercer remembered dandling me as a baby, no — to be sure I wasn't born then — well it must be Sister, no she's only 26- it must be my brother who certainly was born soon after my mother was married. Then he said he remembered helping Grandma to dress my Mother when she was a little baby. I look at him with great awe, I think how old he must be — he don't look it.

Last night we all except Gertrude went off on a spree, namely to see Heller the conjuror. Well I do think Caseneuve is much the cleverest, but he certainly had not so much apparatus. What do you think of pulling out long pieces of black cloth from a hat borrowed from a gentleman and done right in the middle of the audience. Finally returning to the stage piling three tables high up with candy boxes, tin tumblers particolored balls, yards of cloth, a big U.S. flag and finally a big red cloth under which the magician danced for a minute and then produced a remarkable old fashioned old woman's gown and hood, which being shaken out and then opened discovered a pretty little girl who made her bow and ran away. O I forgot he set fire to something inside the hat and then pulled out six lighted chinese lanterns one after the other. The box trick was 3 performed, a string was moved but not enough to open the box still this was not as good a performance as Caseneuve's. Then they had a mediumistic slate writing, and Miss Heller read the names written by people of the audience on a slip of paper. This was wonderful — she put a slate and pencil in a bag held it up and shook it and when she took the slate out something was beautifully written on it. There was table rising, chair rocking etc. etc., I wished all the time you were there with me you would have enjoyed it so much and I wouldn't have felt as tired and sleepy as I did. Mr. Marsh let us in by his latch key, we went off to bed and the gas in the

Library of Congress

hall and parlour downstairs burned all night. Auntie proposes going to bed in the dark, crimping our hair by the kitchen fire in order to make up for the extravagance. Otherwise she fears Grandpa will think himself ruined and will not trust us alone again.

We heard from Papa yesterday from Savannah. He is in Alabama now I presume, they are enjoying themselves and report no more adventures.

I am working hard at my things- Mamma has made a list of all I want I never had so many before in my life and never shall again I presume. It's quite good fun having a trousseau when you have so many things.

A telegram just came dated Jacksonville, Fla. saying Papa and Sister arrived there well and leave tomorrow for Cedarkeys, where may that be?. I must write to them in lieu of Mamma.

With ever so much love, Your own May.

You must show the German letter to Proffessor Hasford. I made a mistake in the translation of the most important word, if you had the letter here I could show you otherwise not.